

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 17, 2008. Claims 1, 4-7 and 9 are now presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 7 and 9 are in independent form. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regard as his invention.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 4-7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patents 6,057,933 (Hudson et al.) and 5,751,310 (Yano et al.), taken in combination.

One important feature of the aspects of the present invention to which the present independent claims are directed is to decide output data from candidates of a plurality of output patterns which are respective combinations of a plurality of color components. The color difference of combinations in which either cyan or magenta (but not both) is used is greater, in comparison with that of combinations in which cyan and magenta are simultaneously used in high-contrast areas. By virtue of this feature, it is possible to process a high-quality image at high speed with an optimum dot configuration in accordance with image data including a plurality of color components representing an input image.

More specifically, independent Claim 1 is directed to a n image processing method that comprises inputting image data representing an image, the image data including a plurality of color components, and deciding output data of a plurality of color components, which represent an image reproduced by an output device, by referring to a table in which a correspondence between input data and a plurality of output patterns is stored, based upon the input data. In this process, the input data is generated by adding

data distributed based upon color difference to the image data of the plurality of color components, and the color difference is generated by calculating the difference between the input data and the plurality of output patterns. The resulting output data of the plurality of color components decided in the deciding step is then output, the output data being decided from candidates of a plurality of output patterns which are respective combinations of the plurality of color components, the color difference of combination in which either cyan or magenta is used being greater, in comparison with the color difference of the combinations in which cyan and magenta are simultaneously used in high-contrast areas.

Hudson relates to a color ink-jet printing system that uses error diffusion processing. As the Examiner notes, *Hudson* does not disclose that the color difference of combinations in which either cyan or magenta is used is greater, in comparison with combinations in which cyan and magenta are simultaneously used in high-contrast areas.

An object of *Yano* is to prevent a visual problem of boundary blotting phenomenon caused between a black pixel and color pixels at the boundary. For this purpose, *Yano* uses a blend of Y, M and C inks for the black pixel, rather than just black (Bk) ink. That is, *Yano* teaches replacement of inks. However, *Yano* does not disclose the mentioned feature of Claim 1, that is, does not teach or suggest that a distinction is made between combinations in which either cyan or magenta (but not both) is used have a greater color difference than do combinations in which cyan and magenta are simultaneously used in high-contrast areas.

Thus, even if combined in the proposed manner, *Hudson* and *Yano* would not have sufficed to lead a person of ordinary skill to the method of Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from Claim 1, and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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